

Washington State Patrol Media Release

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Help Fight Fire – Become a Skywarn Weather Spotter

Weather conditions can sometimes increase the risk of wildland fires. The weather factors that contribute the most to starting fires and fire spread include low humidity, low precipitation, high winds, warm temperatures and lightning. The threat of summer thunderstorms often puts firefighters on the alert. Humidity can be so low that when rain falls, it evaporates before reaching the ground – flashes of lightning can strike the ground and start fires in dry woods and ground cover with no rain to extinguish or slow the blazes.

Skywarn Weather Spotters are a team of volunteers, trained to observe and report significant weather, who support their local community and emergency managers by providing the National Weather Service (NWS) with timely and accurate severe weather reports. Spotter reports, when integrated with all available weather information sources, help forecasters detect hazardous weather and reinforce NWS warning messages. The NWS, media and emergency managers use these reports to encourage people to take proper action and get themselves, their family, their pets and livestock out of harm's way.

If you are interested in becoming a spotter, regional NWS offices and Emergency Management conduct training classes throughout the year. Volunteers are trained to recognize and report significant weather, enhancing information quality. There are many upcoming classes scheduled in the spring around the state. The class is two hours and participants will receive a training certificate upon completion. For more information and to find a local training class, go to www.weather.gov; click on your region and then the spotter training link to view the schedule.

To report fires, please call 9-1-1.

The Office of the State Fire Marshal is a Bureau of the Washington State Patrol, providing fire and life safety services to the citizens of Washington State including inspections of state licensed facilities, plan review of school construction projects, licensing of fire sprinkler contractors and pyrotechnic operators, training Washington State's firefighters, and collecting emergency response data.

**PREVENT FIRES
IT'S YOUR JOB!**